

Breastfeeding At 6 Months

A Counseling Guide for Health Care Professionals

Counseling Message for Mothers	Background for Professionals
Feed your baby when you see signs of hunger (typically 5 to 6 times every 24 hours).	At this age, breastfed babies consume more at a feeding and go longer between feedings.
Breastfed babies may go several days without a bowel movement and then have a large soft stool.	It is normal for babies to go several days without a stool. The color and consistency of stools will vary based on baby's solid food intake.
Introduce solid foods from a spoon when baby is developmentally ready and shows interest in food.	Developmental signs of readiness include sitting with support and controlling the head and neck. Breastfeed first to take the edge off baby's hunger, then offer solid food from a spoon. This helps baby learn to how to move food in the mouth to swallow it. Solid foods will replace some of baby's breastmilk intake, but breastmilk provides most of baby's nutrition.
Breastfed babies over 6 months old may need vitamin D, iron and fluoride supplements.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breastfed babies consuming <16 oz. of infant formula/day need 200 IU/day of vitamin D. Breastfed babies eating <5-6 tablespoons of dry infant cereal per day need 1 mg/kg/day of elemental iron. Evaluate the adequacy of the fluoride content of the household drinking water. It is also possible for babies to get too much fluoride. If the water contains <0.3 ppm fluoride, consult with a physician or dentist about the need for a fluoride supplement.
Introduce a child-sized cup around 6 months of age. The cup can contain expressed breastmilk, water, fruit juice, or iron-fortified formula. Limit fruit juice intake to 4 oz./day.	Between 6-7 months babies can hold a cup and drink from it with help. Babies need to learn to drink from a cup, so limit the use of spill-proof lids with spouts. Offer small amounts of single flavor 100% fruit juice before trying mixed juices. Too much juice can cause diarrhea or prevent baby from eating other healthy foods.



Breastfeeding At 6 Months (continued)

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<p>If formula supplementation is needed, offer iron-fortified infant formula.</p>	<p>Recommend iron-fortified formula as a supplement until the baby's first birthday. For healthy babies, soy or protein hydrolysate formulas do not offer any advantages over cows' milk formulas as a supplemental feeding. If baby is drinking from a cup, encourage parents to offer formula in a cup instead of using a bottle.</p>
<p>You can continue breastfeeding or feeding expressed breastmilk if you return to work or school.</p>	<p>Breastfeeding mothers have several options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breastfeed baby during work or school (child care provider is on-site or nearby). • Breastfeed when with baby and collect/store breastmilk for feedings when apart. • Breastfeed when with baby and formula feed when apart. <p>Tell mothers how to safely store expressed breastmilk.</p>
<p>If you choose to stop breastfeeding, gradual weaning is easiest for you and your baby.</p>	<p>Encourage mothers to initiate weaning gradually by replacing one feeding with formula for 2-3 days. This allows her milk supply to decrease slowly without fullness and discomfort. Mothers can continue to wean at their own pace by replacing once feeding at a time. Mothers can partially wean (i.e., continue breastfeeding several times per day) and maintain that feeding pattern for days or weeks before deciding to replace another feeding.</p>
<p>Questions? Call one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified breastfeeding educators • Certified lactation consultants • Health care professionals • La Leche League • Peer support groups • Physicians • WIC staff 	<p>Mothers and babies are not born knowing how to breastfeed. It takes patience and practice to learn and recognize each other's signals. Identify sources of support from family members, friends, and the community. Encourage mothers to call with questions or for advice.</p>

